

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1           1.       An administrator interface for defining or configuring a market comprising:  
2           a first set of instructions for allowing an administrator to name and select a market;  
3       and  
4           a second set of instructions for allowing said administrator to configure a set of  
5       attributes in a transaction of the market.

1           2.       The interface of Claim 1 wherein said second set of instructions is configured  
2       according to said market type.

1           3.       The interface of Claim 2 wherein the market is one of a competitive market,  
2       an exchange market, a barter, a reverse auction, a consignment store, or a trading post.

1           4.       The interface of Claim 1 wherein said second set of instructions includes  
2       means for selectively associating an attribute of a product or service to be transacted via said  
3       market with a descriptor variable and means for configuring properties of said descriptor  
4       variable.

1           5.       The interface of Claim 4 wherein said means for configuring properties of said  
2       descriptor variable includes means for associating said descriptor variable with one or more  
3       importance values.

1           6.       The interface of Claim 5 further including means for adjusting a user interface  
2       of said market to enable a user to assign importance values to descriptor variables in  
3       accordance with an order by which said descriptor values are selected or entered by said user  
4       via said user interface.

1           7.       The interface of Claim 5 wherein said one or more importance values is a  
2       buyer importance value.

1           8.       The interface of Claim 5 wherein said one or more importance values is a  
2       seller importance value.

1           9.       The interface of Claim 4 wherein said means for configuring properties of said  
2 descriptor variable includes means for defining said descriptor variable as being discrete or  
3 continuous.

1           10.      The interface of Claim 4 wherein said second set of instructions further  
2 includes means for selecting an evaluation method for evaluating said descriptor variable  
3 during market operation.

1           11.      The interface of Claim 10 wherein said evaluation method includes a distance  
2 method, a more is better method, a less is better method, a strictly equal to method, a not  
3 equal to method, a less than or equal to method, and/or a greater than or equal to method.

1           12.      The interface of Claim 11 wherein said second set of instructions further  
2 includes means for selecting a type of input field associated with said descriptor variable for  
3 inclusion in a user interface associated with said market.

1           13.      The interface of Claim 12 wherein said type of input field is a text box or a  
2 drop-down menu or checkbox.

1           14.      The interface of Claim 13 wherein each menu item of said drop down menu or  
2 each input to said text box is associated with said descriptor variable, each menu item or  
3 input further associated with a descriptor value.

1           15.      The interface of Claim 14 wherein said descriptor value is associated with one  
2 or more importance values.

1           16.      The interface of Claim 15 wherein said one or more importance values  
2 includes seller and/or buyer importance values, which indicate an importance of said  
3 descriptor value associated with said descriptor variable associated with said attribute to said  
4 seller and/or buyer, respectively.

1           17.      The interface of Claim 16 in communication with a system for computing a  
2 total match score (  $Z_{ij}$  ) based on said buyer and/or seller preferences and importance values  
3 according to the following equation:

$$Z_{ij} = \sqrt{Z_{ij}^i Z_{ij}^j} , \quad [8]$$

5 where  $Z_{ij}^i$  is a match score based on buyer importance values, and  $Z_{ij}^j$  is a match score based  
6 on seller importance values.

1 18. The interface of Claim 14 wherein said descriptor value is associated with a  
2 continuous descriptor variable.

1 19. The interface of Claim 1 wherein said first set of instructions includes a set of  
2 system administrator interface input panels.

1 20. The interface of Claim 19 wherein said system administrator interface input  
2 panels include one or more input fields for naming a market to be selected or created.

1 21. The interface of Claim 20 wherein said system administrator interface input  
2 panels further include one or more input fields for associating said market to be created with  
3 a user group of market administrators.

1 22. The interface of Claim 21 wherein said system administrator interface input  
2 panels further include one or more input fields for associating a market administrator with  
3 said user group.

1 23. The interface of Claim 20 wherein said system administrator interface input  
2 panels further include input fields for copying or editing an existing market configuration.

1 24. The interface of Claim 23 wherein said system administrator interface input  
2 panels further include input fields for specifying a server and a location of data associated  
3 with said market configuration.

1 25. The interface of Claim 1 wherein said second set of instructions includes a set  
2 of market administrator interface input panels.

1 26. The interface of Claim 25 wherein said second set of instructions includes an  
2 input field for defining said market in terms of market type.

1 27. The interface of Claim 26 wherein said second set of instructions includes an  
2 input field for defining said market in terms of transaction type.

1           28.     The interface of Claim 27 wherein said second set of instructions includes  
2 input fields for defining said market according to whether or not said market will transact  
3 entities that are assigned to categories.

1           29.     The interface of Claim 28 wherein said second set of instructions includes  
2 input fields for defining said market according to whether or not said market will transact  
3 entities that are assigned descriptors.

1           30.     The interface of Claim 29 wherein said second set of instructions includes  
2 input fields for defining said market according to whether or not goods and/or services will  
3 be transacted via said market.

1           31.     A method for configuring a market or internal allocation system comprising  
2 the steps of:  
3           employing a system administrator interface to adjust a configurator environment to  
4 accept market configuration input from a market administrator that is associated with said  
5 market;  
6           using a market administrator interface to configure said market via said configuration  
7 input by specifying market behavior details; and  
8           automatically integrating market configuration details, including said market behavior  
9 details, into an operational market via a market generation engine, said market generation  
10 engine in communication with said system administrator interface and said market  
11 administrator interface.

1           32.     The method of Claim 31 wherein said market behavior details specified in said  
2 step of using include market type; attributes of entities to be transacted via said market;  
3 descriptor variables to be assigned to said attributes; and importance values to be associated  
4 with said descriptor variables.

1           33.     The method of Claim 32 wherein said market behavior details further include  
2 matching criteria for matching two or more entities to be transacted via said market.

1           34.     The method of Claim 31 wherein said step of employing further includes  
2 generating market administrator accounts and market administrator user groups associated  
3 with one or more markets.

1           35.     The method of Claim 24 wherein said market generation engine includes an  
2 intelligence algorithm for recommending a market type via said market administrator  
3 interface based on remaining market behavior details and feedback from previous or current  
4 market implementations.

1           36.     The method of Claim 25 wherein said market generation engine further  
2 includes means for performing predictive market simulations according to said market  
3 behavior details.

1           37.     A system for generating a matching-intensive website comprising:  
2 first means for indicating products and/or services to be sold via said website;  
3 second means for providing a list of attributes associated with said products and/or  
4 services;  
5 third means for selectively associating weights with said attributes; and  
6 fourth means for automatically generating an website in accordance with said  
7 products and/or services, said list of attributes, and said weights.

1           38.     The system of Claim 27 wherein said third means includes a user interface and  
2 an administrator interface in communication with a weight-mapping function.

1           39.     The system of Claim 27 wherein said fourth means includes means for  
2 selecting a type of market for use with said e-commerce site.

1           40.     The system of Claim 29 wherein said type of market is an exchange, a  
2 competitive market, a modified competitive market, a consignment store, a qualified auction,  
3 an internal allocation, and/or a futures and credit market.

1           41.     The system of Claim 27 wherein said fourth means includes means for  
2 generating a database and an accompanying matching engine for searching said database in  
3 accordance with said attributes and weights of said products and/or services.

1           42.     The system of Claim 31 wherein said matching engine includes fifth means for  
2 receiving one or more inputs; sixth means for weighting said one or more inputs and  
3 providing one or more weighted inputs in response thereto; and seventh means for accessing  
4 data in accordance with said one or more weighted inputs.

1           43.     The system of Claim 32 wherein said matching engine is a matching engine  
2     for matching products or services to a user of said engine in accordance with said one or  
3     more inputs provided by said user and/or said administrator.

1           44.     The system of Claim 33 wherein said sixth means includes one or more  
2     interfaces for specifying a continuous or discrete descriptor variable.

1           45.     The system of Claim 34 wherein said one or more interfaces includes a user  
2     interface and an administrator interface, said administrator interface including means for  
3     allowing said administrator to adjust default weights associated with said products and/or  
4     services.

1           46.     A system for configuring an efficient matching engine comprising:  
2     an administrator interface for selecting a market type, transaction type, whether items  
3     and/or services are to be matched, types of attributes to be associated with said items and/or  
4     services, and a first set of weights to be associated with said attributes and  
5     a user interface for allowing one or more users to specify and rank relative  
6     preferences of said attributes.

1           47.     The system of Claim 36 wherein said efficient matching engine includes  
2     means for searching a database of said products and/or services and returning one or more  
3     matched results based on said relative preferences and said first set of preferences.

1           48.     The system of Claim 37 wherein said one or more users include a buyer and a  
2     seller.

1           49.     The system of Claim 38 wherein said user interface includes means for  
2     allowing a buyer to assign a second set of values to said attributes.

1           50.     The system of Claim 39 wherein said user interface further includes means for  
2     permitting a seller to assign a third set of values to said attributes.

1           51.     The system of Claim 40 wherein said second set of values represent default  
2     values, which are associated with said attributes when said first set of values are not provided  
3     by said buyer.

1           52.     The system of Claim 41 wherein said system further includes a means for  
2     scoring each product or service in accordance with said first set of values, said second set of  
3     values, and said third set of values associated with said attributes of said product and/or  
4     service.

1           53.     The system of Claim 42 wherein said means for scoring includes a distance  
2     method.

1           54.     An administrator interface for creating a user interface to be used to transact  
2     electronic commerce over a network, the administrator interface comprising  
3             instructions for allowing a human operator to define a market type and  
4             instructions for allowing a human operator to define one or more attributes to be used  
5     in association with an item to be transacted via said market.